

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR CITRUS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**AMENDED
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. C-2015-33A**

IN RE:

UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

WHEREAS, the mission of the Unified Family Court of Citrus County is a commitment to developing a fully integrated, comprehensive approach to handling all cases involving children and families in a prompt and efficient manner;

WHEREAS, the Fifth Judicial Circuit created the Unified Family Court by Administrative Order No. A2002-3. In order to establish uniformity in certain types of case and to comply with UFC and its principles;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as the Administrative Judge of Citrus County, in order to meet the requirements of A2015-10, and to better serve the needs of the citizens of the State of Florida, it is hereby **ORDERED** as follows:

I. UNIFIED FAMILY COURT JURISDICTION

- A. Judicial Divisions: The Unified Family Court (UFC) ~~shall~~ may include the following case types:
1. Dissolution of marriage;
 2. Division and dissolution of property arising out of dissolution of marriage;
 3. Annulment;
 4. Support unconnected to dissolution of marriage;
 5. Parentage;
 6. Disestablishment of paternity;
 7. Child support;
 8. URESA/UIFSA;
 9. Custodial care of and access to children;
 10. Proceedings for temporary or concurrent custody of minor children by extended family;
 11. Adoption;

12. Domestic, repeat, stalking, sexual and dating violence injunctions;
13. Juvenile dependency;
14. Termination of parental rights; juvenile delinquency; and
15. Any other cases identified by the Court.

B. Related Cases: Cases constitute “related case” when any of the parties are either presently or previously involved in litigation.

1. A completed Notice of Related Case shall be filed with the Court by the Petitioner in accordance with Rule 2.545(d), Florida Rules of Judicial Administration. If there appears to be related case that has not been identified, the attorney or litigant may file a Notice with the Clerk requesting a review of the cases by providing the related cases, identified by Case Number and an explanation of why the cases are related.
2. The Clerk shall identify related cases upon filing of a new case or a case which is reopened on a petition for modification only as defined by SRS Rules. Upon receipt of any Petition or Complaint with a Notice of Related Case form, for relief over which UFC has jurisdiction, the Clerk shall determine whether any of the parties were previously involved in litigation seeking any of the relief set forth herein.
3. Once related cases are identified, the Clerk shall notify case management. If at least one of the related case is assigned to the juvenile division and at least one of the related case is assigned to the family division, the Order of Acceptance/Denial of Referral to the Unified Family Court shall be entered. See Sample Exhibit A. Thereafter, case management will send a notice to all parties.

II. IDENTIFICATION AND COORDINATION OF RELATED CASES

In order to conserve judicial resources, avoid inconsistent court orders, and eliminate multiple appearances on the same issues, the following policies and procedures will be followed unless otherwise ordered by the court.

A. RELATED CASES

The petitioner in a family case shall file a Notice of Related Cases. All parties shall comply with the requirements of Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.085(d). The Clerk of Court will initially identify related cases upon filing of a new case or reopened on a petition for modification. If the Court or case management identifies a UFC case, an Order and Notice of Referral to the Unified Family Court (See Sample Exhibit A) will be processed thru the UFC Judge and forwarded to the Clerk to be docketed into the case management system.

B. CASE MANAGEMENT

1. Case management services and support enable the family court judges to assess, differentiate, and monitor resources needed for handling cases, to be able to identify collateral cases affecting the parties involved and to monitor the movement of cases through the judicial process.
2. Following the receipt of a list of cases from the Clerk, case management shall conduct initial review and evaluation of cases for referral to UFC.

C. COORDINATION OF RELATED CASES

1. Upon discovery of the existence of one or more pending related cases involving the same parties, or their children, in which one or more judges has been assigned, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the presiding judges, dependency, family and domestic and repeat violence companion cases shall be assigned as follows:

- a. Dependency/Family: If there is an open dependency case at any time during the pendency of a dissolution of marriage or other related family law matter, the presiding family judge shall defer all matters involving custody, visitation and child support to the presiding dependency judge.

If the dependency case is closed without an adjudication of dependency, the case may return to the family court judge who heard the other matters by an Order of Referral. If there is an adjudication of dependency as to either of the parents, then the case shall remain with the dependency judge who shall then determine, primary resident, time sharing, and child support and enter a Final Judgment on these issues in the Dissolution of Marriage Action or related family law matter.

- b. Dependency/Domestic Violence/Repeat Violence/Stalking/Dating Violence/Sexual Violence: If there is an active dependency case and a domestic violence, repeat violence, stalking, dating violence, or sexual violence case is subsequently filed that involves the same parties it shall be assigned to the UFC division ***after the return hearing has been concluded***. This provision shall not be interpreted to preclude the dependency judge from entering an ex-parte/temporary injunction. Excluded are cases requiring minor modifications such as change of address or dismissals.
- c. Family/Domestic Violence/Repeat Violence/Stalking/Dating Violence/Sexual Violence: If there is an active family case and a

domestic violence, repeat violence, stalking, dating violence, or sexual violence case is subsequently filed that involves the same parties it shall be assigned to the UFC division *after the return hearing has been concluded*. Similarly, if a Domestic Relations case is filed and there is an existing injunction that involves the same parties both cases shall be assigned to the UFC division. Excluded are cases requiring minor modifications such as change of address or dismissals.

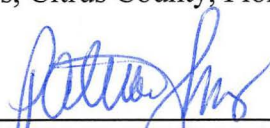
2. When the judges involved decide it is unnecessary or impractical to assign all of the cases to the same judge, the judges will exchange information so that each judge involved with the family is aware of the other pleadings and issues being addressed.

III. GENERAL UNIFIED FAMILY COURT OPERATIONS

- A. At the time of filing any case type delineated in Section I ¶ A above with the Clerk of Court and pursuant to Florida Rules of Judicial Administration 2.545(d), parties must file a fully executed Notice of Related Case Form.
- B. In the event a Notice of Related Case is not filed as required and there is no indication on the civil cover sheet, the Clerk shall make the initial determination as to the existence of related family law cases and forward such information to case managers.
- C. Pursuant to Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.006, the Clerk is directed to docket copies of orders linking/transferring related cases, Final Judgments and any order related to a change in the custody of minor child(ren) in each related case involving the same parties, in which the Judge/Court staff has listed all relevant case numbers in the Order or Final Judgment. If the orders are submitted in hard copies, the Court shall send hard copies of each in which the Order/Judgment is to be filed.
- D. Unified Family Court procedures shall be evaluated routinely by the Administrative Judge or her designee to determine its effectiveness in implementing Citrus County's goal of addressing family law matters in a comprehensive, coordinated manner.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Inverness, Citrus County, Florida this 17

day of Sept, 2015.



PATRICIA V. THOMAS
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
CITRUS COUNTY

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR CITRUS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

Petitioner,

vs.

CASE NO.:

Respondent.

_____ /

ORDER AND NOTICE OF REFERRAL TO THE UNIFIED FAMILY COURT (“UFC”)

THIS CAUSE having come before the Court on its own motion and having considered that the above captioned case is referred for consideration of assignment to Unified Family Court, it is thereupon:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the below cases meet the requirements of Administrative Order No. A2015-10, therefore **are/are not** referred to the UFC.

Existing case(s) number:

Case Type:

Case(s) pending UFC:

Clerk reviewed ___ Yes ___ No

REFERRED on this ____ day of _____, 20__.

CIRCUIT JUDGE

**ORDER OF ACCEPTANCE/DENIAL OF REFERRAL
TO THE UNIFIED FAMILY COURT**

THIS CAUSE having come before the Court on the Order and Notice of Referral to the Unified Family Court, it is thereupon:

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED:

1. The above referral is ____ **ACCEPTED** and that the Clerk of Court shall reassign the above captioned case(s) to UFC.
2. The above referral is ____ **DENIED.**

DONE AND ORDERD on this ____ day of _____, 20__ in Citrus County, Florida.

CIRCUIT JUDGE

“EXHIBIT A”

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was furnished to the below-named individuals by United States Mail, first class postage pre-paid, in hand delivery, e-mail or courthouse mailbox this _____ day of _____, 2015.

- UFC Judge
- Referring Judge
- Case Management
- Petitioner
- Respondent

Judicial Assistant/Deputy Clerk